6th November 1947] [K. Uppi Sahib Bahadur]

the sympathy of everybody. He is at his wit's end to find the necessary finance. We all have sympathy for him. But on this matter I have to oppose on principle. Gambling, drinking and games of chance are all included in the same category. This Bill aims at enhancing the income from a prohibited act. Betting is equally bad, if not more than drinking. We all know that the Congress, before they came into office, were all for purifying the nation and for weaning the people from immorality. But the moment they came into office, they have begun to justify some of the acts against which they were crying hoarse all these years. As my hon. Friend behind me (Abdul Latif Farookhi Sahib Bahadur) told the House, this Bill is a camouflage. A Bill asking for permission to legally increase the tax shows that the Government are not going to prohibit racing altogether. Because the Government are in an awkward financial position, they want to get some more income from an immoral toll for meeting the deficiency.

" The income from betting tax may be 23 lakhs this year, and with the proposed increase it may be 35 lakhs next year. When we ask for prohibiting racing next year, the Government may turn round and say: 'We will be losing 35 lakhs; how are we to make good the loss? How are we to run the Government?' The Finance Minister will confront us with such questions when we plead for the abolition of racing, and we will have to help him. We are not going to be a party to such a position and we oppose the Bill on principle."

The motion was put and carried.

Clauses 2, 3, 1 and the Preamble were one by one put and carried.

THE HON SRI B. GOPALA REDDI :—" I move—

' *that the Bill be passed into law.*' "

The motion was put and carried and the Bill was passed into law.

(2) THE MADRAS ABKARI (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1947
(L.A. BILL NO. 30 OF 1947)

MR. PRESIDENT :—" It is a strange coincidence that Gambling and Betting and Prohibition Bills are coming on the same day." (Laughter.)

THE HON. MR. DANIEL THOMAS :—" But my Bill is on a higher plane.

" Mr. President, Sir, I move—

' *that the Madras Abkari (Amendment) Bill,* 1947 (*L.A. Bill No.* 30 *of* 1947), *as passed by the Assembly* [a], *be taken into consideration at once.*'

a Printed as Appendix VI on page 651 infra.

[Mr. Daniel Thomas] [6th November 1947

"This matter is a very simple one. Under Section 13 of the Madras Abkari Act, 1886, the Government have power to prescribe the quantity of liquor or intoxicating drugs that any person can possess. Clause (2) of the proviso to that section makes the section inapplicable to foreign liquor in the possession of any person for his *bona fide* private consumption and not for sale. The result is that a person can possess unlimited quantity of such liquor for his private consumption. Hon. Members of this House are well aware that shortly after the Congress Ministry assumed power, one firka in each district has been selected for intensive rural development. Under this scheme, various steps have been taken for improving the economic and social welfare of the people in the firkas. One such step is the closure of the abkari and opium shops. You will realize that a firka is a small dry area in the midst of a vast wet area so far as non-prohibition districts are concerned. We have experienced practical difficulties. For instance, Bezwada firka in the wet district of Kistna has been selected for intensive rural development, and the abkari and opium shops in that firka have been closed. But Bezwada is well served by the railway. One has only to board the train and go to the nearest station on either side of the firka to bring in unlimited quantities. The Government are losing a good deal of revenue by the closure of shops, but the position has become scandalous in Bezwada. In view of these circumstances, the present Amending Bill has been brought forward to empower the Government to limit the quantity of foreign liquor which any person can possess. I believe this is a matter to which all sections of the House will agree, as it is necessary for the proper working of the intensive rural development scheme. After all I believe this will be only a temporary measure. (Mr. President : Throughout the Province?) Power is taken for the whole province, though it will be applied to wet districts only by notification. After all, as I said, this will be only a temporary measure. Before long, the whole province will go dry. (Mr. President : I am sure you cannot make Kistna dry!) The Kistna should ever remain wet and irrigate the lands adjoining the river; that is the hope and prayer of the Madras Government. (Interruption.) The same thing may be applied to the Godavari as well.

"I hope the motion will be agreed to without demur."

The motion was put and carried.

Clauses 2, 1 and the Preamble were one by one put and carried.

12-15 p.m. THE HON. MR. DANIEL THOMAS :—" Sir, I move—

'*that the Bill be passed into law.*'"

The motion was put and carried and the Bill was passed into law.